

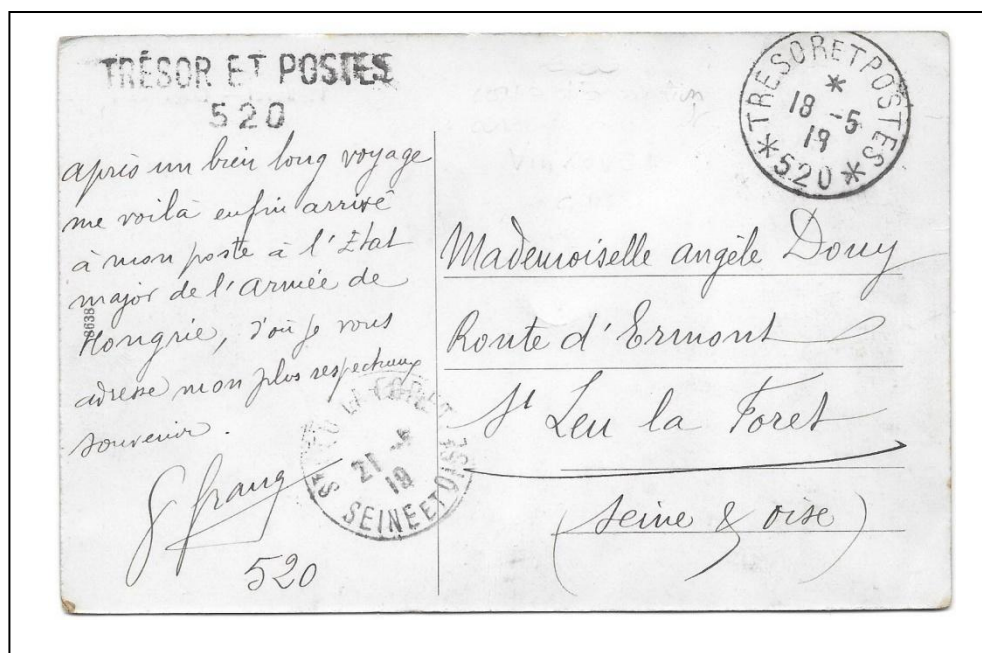


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The Yugoslavia Study Group

Founded in 1984 to promote the study of the stamps and postal history of Yugoslavia, its predecessor and successor states

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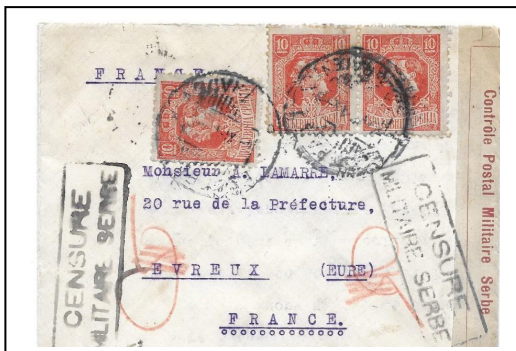
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From the President

One of our former members Ron Hollis sadly passed away at the end of April at the ripe old age of ninety-eight. He was a well-known and eminent philatelist and built up a large collection of Yugoslav material. His knowledge and distinguished presence will be sorely missed.

Once again, I make an appeal for someone to step forward to take the post of Auction Manager. This job is an important post within the Group, providing a vital service to members, enabling them to circulate their surplus material within the Society and to improve their collections. It does not matter if you have not done the job before because help will be given to start you off.

I look forward to hopefully meeting members at Autumn Stampex when we will have a series of members' displays.

A J Bosworth FRPSL

From the Editor

Some weeks ago, I was in the position of only having one or two articles for this edition of Jugopošta. In my time as Editor (my first edition was March 2012) this has been perhaps only the second time I have been in that position. I emailed a number of you that have contributed regularly or occasionally in the recent past to explain the situation and I have been most gratified by the response that has given me enough articles for this edition and probably the next one as well, but just a reminder that I rely on all of you to offer up articles from time to time, which allows me to try and give a good balance of subjects and a mixture of long and short articles in each edition.

As a result of this I am publishing two articles in this edition. Both concern the First World War. The first is by Jérôme Bourguignat, who has kindly translated one of his own articles, which concerns the part played by the French military post in the immediate aftermath of the war in dealing with civilian mail in various parts of the Balkans. The article goes beyond the bounds of what was to become Yugoslavia but gives an excellent overview of the chaotic situation that prevailed at that time.

The second article is by Milan Radovanović and concerns another of the British women who provided medical, nursing and financial support to Serbia in the First World War.

We will be holding the annual members' meeting at Stampex on Saturday 14th September from 10 am to 12 noon in Room F (but check the location on arrival, it could change) where any members are welcome to come and display their material as well as any interested guests.

Elsewhere in this edition, you will find an advert for the Joint Societies' Meeting to be held in Bradford on Saturday 3rd August. Many of you will be aware that this is intended for members of the societies, including ours, covering the philately of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Poland. Also, many of you reading this will be a member of more than one of these Societies. I thoroughly recommend any of you to attend this meeting ably organised by Yvonne Wheatley, both because of the quality of the material usually on display and because of the excellent catering (buffet lunch and tea and cake to finish).

French military post and civil mail in the Balkans at the end of the First World War

by Jérôme Bourguignat

This article was published in French in Documents Philateliques No 240, April 2019, and has been translated into English by the author

Introduction

This article presents the contribution of the French military post to the recovery of the mail service for civilians in the Balkans after the First World War¹. It is based on the archives of the Service Historique de la Défense (SHD in Paris)².

The 1918-1920 time interval is particularly complex. The end of the fighting after the armistice on the “North east battlefield” (11 November in France) did not mean the end of the war. To weaken the central powers, and to satisfy the Wilsonian principle of the People’s right, the Allies favoured the independence demands of the Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which collapsed at the beginning of November 1918.

Hungary proclaimed itself as an independent republic, so hoping to be recognised as neutral. That is without considering the territorial appetites of the Allies of the region (Serbia and Rumania, as well as Czechoslovakia in the north), which occupied territories of the ex-Kingdom of Hungary with a policy fait-accompli. Moreover, the “red” threat approached dangerously around the Black Sea and contaminated the dismembered and demoralised Hungary. The communications, intrinsically difficult in Eastern Europe, were made even more difficult by the destruction and the shortages.

The military operations in the Balkans were characterised at first by a speedy advance of the troops after the collapse of the battlefield at the end of September 1918. Units were moved very frequently to enforce the armistice conditions, to stand between allies that became rivals, and due to the weariness of the troops after all those battling years.

The French military post did its best to follow those movements. At first, the mail was distributed from Salonica, following the deployment of troops. This route was gradually abandoned as the railway network was restored to link with Western Europe. Of particular importance was the restoration of the “Orient-Express” and the southerly route “Simplon-Orient-Express”.

Further to the east, the English and French navies’ ship mail in the Black Sea and several supply bases were opened, for example in Constanza (Rumania). Quickly, these military postal services were made available to the civil administrations in various countries. Strangely, mail volumes

¹ The mail services performed by the Corps d’Occupation de Constantinople are excluded from this study, as many articles have already covered it.

² Bertrand Sinais, in his thesis “*The French military mail service in the Orient during the first world war*” (1977), has already splendidly exploited the archives, but has not completely treated the civilian mail.

seemed low, as one would have expected a massive demand after the total break in the exchange of mail for almost 5 years.

Note: the spelling of the names of locations comes from the archives; it can differ from the ones used nowadays. In this article, the current name is given in brackets if it differs significantly.

The routing of the Albanian civil mail

The “Confins Albanais” (Albanian Borders) were the first area in which the French military post carried the civilian mail, following its conquest at the beginning of 1918. The mail service was under the authority of the military territorial commander. Stamps were created in the territories of Pogradec, Klista and Kortiza. A civilian organisation indirectly managed by the territorial commander operated in each of these territories³. It processed the mail, subjected it to French censorship and then put it in closed bags which were handed over to the French military post for routing.



Figure 1: Commercial cover from Koritza (Albania) dated 14 September 1918, while the Armée d'Orient took care of the mail service. The cover is closed with very few peculiar labels (only a few copies known), plus a handstamp (badly struck) of the Koritza post. The letter is again controlled at the Armée d'Orient, with the handstamp n°3.

The military movements in the Balkans (October 1918 – January 1919)

³ The archive folder SHD/DAT 20N850 contains the mail administration in the Territory of Pogradec. The subject of the local post office will not be considered further in this article.

On 15 September 1918, the Armée d'Orient went on the offensive; the Bulgarian battlefield was broken and an armistice (the first of WWI) was quickly signed with Bulgaria on 29 September. This provoked the successive surrenders of the Ottoman Empire (30 October) then of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (3 November).

The Serbian and French troops progressed very quickly. The Serbian troops liberated Serbia (Figure 2); the French troops were located more in the north and also occupied strategic places such as Fiume and Ragusa (Dubrovnik). On 28 October 1918, the right wing of the French Armée d'Orient on the Danube changed its name to "Armée de Danube" (AD) with 3 divisions⁴ with the mission to cover Rumania and Ukraine. The rest of the French Armée d'Orient with 3 other divisions occupied the south of Hungary and was ready to advance on Budapest, and even if necessary on Vienna. It was renamed Armée de Hongrie (AH) in March 1919. In this article "AH" will be used to denote these 3 divisions even before the change of naming.



Figure 2: cover from Belgrade dated 4 November 1918 (3 days after the liberation of the city). Arrival backstamp dated 11 January 1919, so 68 days, a trip duration longer than the values indicated in reports (see below). Serbian censorship with the handstamp previously used in Corfu and a rare Serbian label.

The supply lines were very extended and the communication infrastructures, already limited before the war, were in a poor condition. The Orient Express, the major communication line through the Balkans, was not operational anymore because it crossed Germany and Austria, which were enemy territories. Besides, the Armée d'Orient would always have a chronic lack of qualified personnel and means of transportation.

A report from the AH Trésor et Postes⁵ summarises the very rapid evolution of the situation: from 1 November 1918 until 15 April 1919, the communication lines changed 11 times, but the

⁴ This is actually more complicated; the detail can be found in the book by General Bernachot (complete reference in the bibliography)

⁵ SHD/DAT file 20N618, undated table

transit time, which was initially between 15 and 17 days, was gradually reduced to 4 days. See the detail in Appendix 1.

The AH and AD mail service supported 6 divisions. At the beginning of November 1918, the transit was by Tarente, Salonica and Macdeonia. It amounted to 2 tons and 8 m³ per day and per division. 15 bags per day for the Serbian army were forwarded by the same route as the supply: Salonica – Guevgueli – Veles, the ferrying beyond Veles in the Vardar valley being performed by the Serbian service⁶.

After 20 November the troops progressed enough in Serbia so that the AH mail could be despatched via the Fiume base (Secteur Postal 520) via the “gares régulatrices” (transit railway stations). The mission order shown in Figure 3 is from this period. Semlin was the terminus of the railway coming from Western Europe next to Belgrade, on the other side of the Sava river where the bridge had been destroyed. Downstream to the “gares régulatrices” the mail was carried by all the available means: rail, speedboats on the Danube, small vans and arabas (carriages).

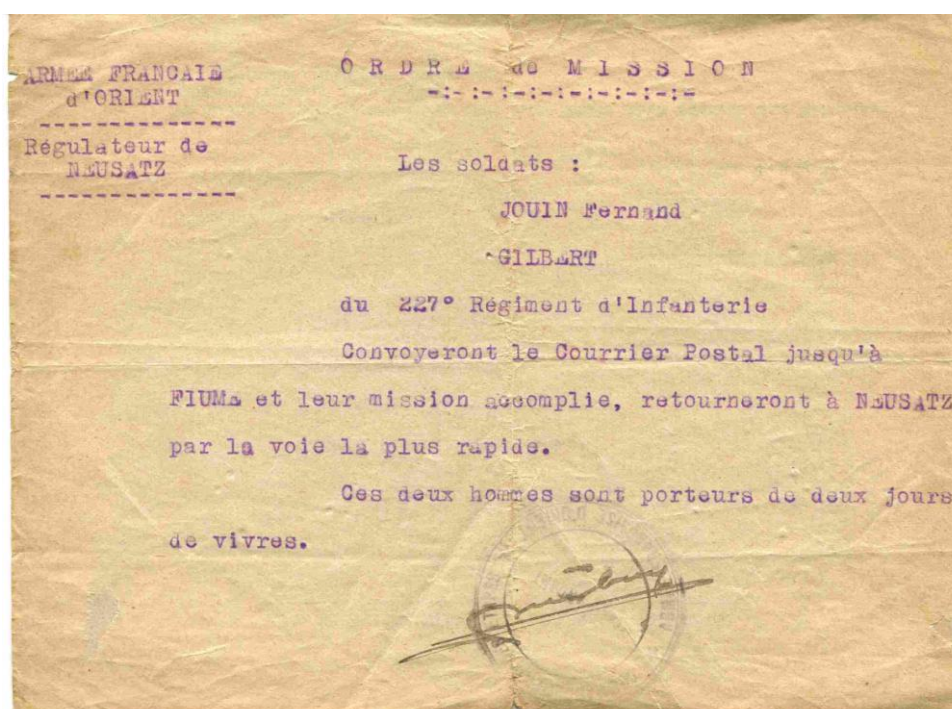


Figure 3: mission order for escorted mail (undated) (collection of Bernard Jusserand).

However, the AH published the following communiqué On 8 December⁷: “the bad state of the communication lines in the Balkans and the heavy snowfalls brought, during November, delays to the mail routing for the Armée d’Orient. All the measures are taken to satisfy the stakeholders and improve mail speed.”

⁶ SHD/DAT file 20N310, note dated 13 November 1918

⁷ SHD/DAT file 20N310

On 18 January 1919, a fast transport for the official mail from Salonica to Belgrade was proposed: by railway from Salonica to Mitrovica, then by motor car, with a daily departure. The routing time would be of 4 days. The official mail was typically 40 kg a day⁸.

Fiume, which had become the main AH Secteur Postal, became more and more important at the end of January.

The reopening of the Orient Express (February 1919)

On 15 February 1919, the mail routing was radically modified, by using the Orient Express train to Bucharest. The Tarente route was abandoned and the train went through Vienna, crossing enemy territory. See the map in Figure 4 demonstrating the former and the new route. That is why, from 11 April, a new route was set up via the Simplon tunnel avoiding Germany, Austria and Hungary⁹.

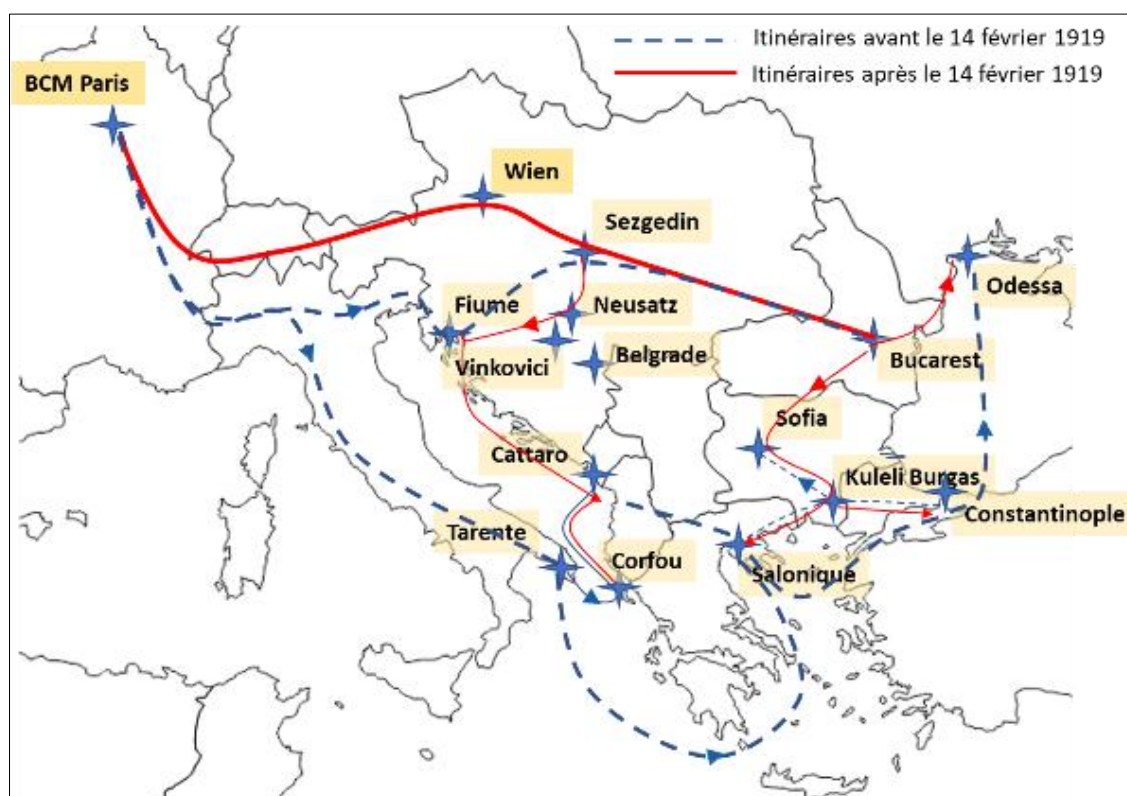


Figure 4: modification of the mail routing after the re-opening of the Orient Express

The mail routing remained difficult in Central Europe: there were only some organised trains, and the operations were complicated by the snow and by the lack of personnel and of mail coaches.

⁸ SHD/DAT file 20N310

⁹ The tunnel was opened in 1906 but the international agreements blocked any direct connection with the Balkans by this route, the itinerary via Vienna having the commercial monopoly. There was however before the war a line from Paris to Venice via the Simplon tunnel.

The daily train leaving Paris included a mail coach; the mail for the Armée de Hongrie was off-loaded at Vinkovici (FPO 501A then main FPO 520 moved from Fiume on 25 April), sorted out and forwarded to its destination by an express train to Belgrade.

A connecting train to Bucharest left Vinkovici via Szegedin (Szeged) and Temesvar (Timisoara). The mail to Belgrade was in fact forwarded up to Semlin station (now Zemun, in the Belgrade suburbs, on the other bank of the Sava river), forwarded in a small van up to the port of Semlin, then carried by speedboat to Belgrade. To minimise the delays, the transportation means were alerted by telephone. The organisation of a travelling post office between Zagreb and Vinkovici was considered in order to remove the extra 12 hours duration necessary for sorting the mail at Vinkovici¹⁰.

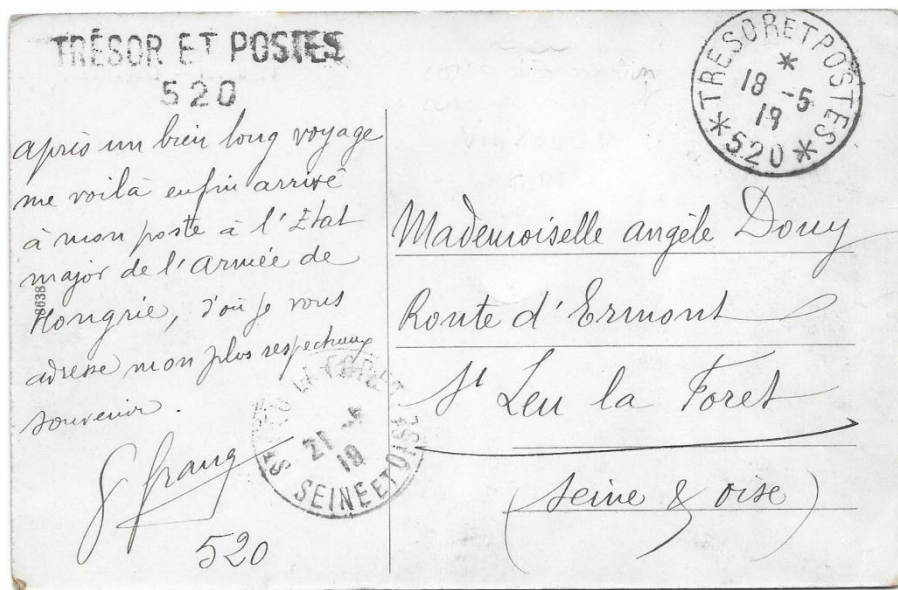


Figure 5: picture postcard with a view of Vinkovici where Secteur Postal 520 was based (dated 19 May)

On 3 June, the main FPO 520 was moved from Vinkovici to Szegedin.

The routing of the Serbian civil mail

The Trésor et Postes aux Armées agreed on 21 January to carry the Serbian mail to Western countries (mail to former enemy countries was still prohibited in France). This amounted to 10 kg a day¹¹. It used the same routes as the military mail.

A letter from AH to Constantinople (Armée d'Orient HQ) dated 9 April¹² proposed the following modalities to exchange mail to France by the route Paris-Modane-Fiume-Bucarest. There would be four exchange offices under the authority of an AH Secteur Postal:

- 1 for the Agram region (Zagreb)
- 1 for the region between Brod and Ragusa (Dubrovnik)

¹⁰ SHD/DAT file 20N310, telegram of 16 April 1919

¹¹ SHD/DAT file 20N617

¹² SHD/DAT file 20N310, courrier des Armées Alliées en Orient, Service des Postes Militaires françaises de Constantinople

- 1 for Old Serbia (Belgrade)
- 1 for Southern Serbia and the Serbian troops in Macedonia. This last office would be opened only if the communications Belgrade-Nisch and Nisch-Uskub remained interrupted
- The mail despatches to and for Salonica would use the same line as the mail for the French troops in Macedonia (via Sofia and Kulelei-Burgas)
- The Serbian mail transiting through France for overseas would be routed to Paris Etranger in closed mail despatches.



Figure 6: franked picture postcard from Uskub/Skopje (Macedonian capital) dated 22 February 1919 (Julian calendar). Transit cds from the Serbian military post (partial strike at the bottom) and a Serbian censorship mark (faint). Cds arrival at Binche on 19 March (Gregorian calendar). Considering the 12 day gap between both calendars, the card journey lasted 37 days. Delcampe.

The Orient Express became the backbone for mail routing, Salonica was served by boat from Constantinople, and the Tarente route was abandoned at the end of April. This meant the mail went by train as far as Constanza, then took a first boat to Constantinople and then another one towards Salonica.

The routing conditions were poor: a mail coach was plundered at Vinkovici on 4 May 1919. The mail coach and the French luggage had to be escorted on the Simplon Orient Express because there were numerous thefts.

A report on 3 June¹³ summarised the routing mail delays with “test letters”. The delay was getting shorter and shorter, only 3 days were required for a letter from Paris to Belgrade and 5 days for Bulgaria. The duration was greater for troops stationed in remote places, sometimes very difficult to reach.

¹³ SHD/DAT file 20N310

The FPO 501A, allocated to the French mission in Belgrade¹⁴, paid the Serbian mandates from 1 June 1919 in dinars or crowns (and not in francs). The French Army performed the post office

service, but it was only temporary until the Serbian government got back its own mail service¹⁵.

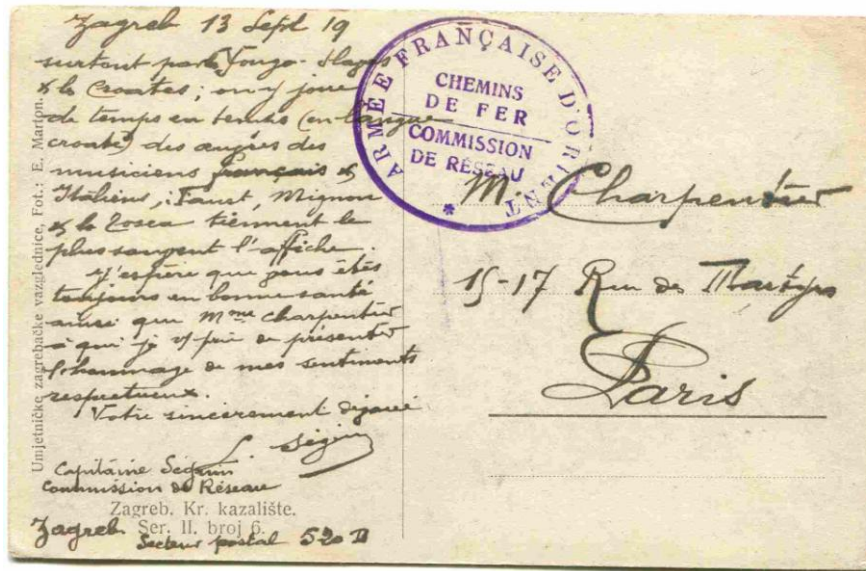


Figure 7: the Simplon Orient Express line was strategic and was watched by French officers (Collection of Bernard Jusserand)



Figure 8: letter from a captain of the Italian mission sent by FP 501A on 27 June 1919

Then the FPO 516A operated in Belgrade after 25 October 1919¹⁶. Installed at 15 Prince Michel Street, it sent the mail daily to Szeged (FPO 516), Constantinople and France (via the Orient Express) and for Novi Sad.

¹⁴ SHD/DAT file 20N818

¹⁵ SHD/DAT file 20N618, letter sent from General de Lobit, commander-in chief of the Armée de Hongrie, to the Voivod Michitch, 7 July 1919.



Figure 9: free military picture postcard of Belgrade, cds FPO 516A of 2 January 1920 (Collection of Pierre Roussot)

The Armie de Hongrie was liquidated in September 1919. Some units remained around Szegedin, which was totally evacuated in February 1920. The French military post continued to use the Orient Express for the troops occupying the Constantinople area.

The Serbian civil mail was still handled according to the same procedures as the military mail. Indeed, from 10 February 1920, *“the military and civilian correspondence to the Armée d’Orient and the Balkan countries will be carried and sent between Paris and Belgrade by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits. The transport service Belgrade and the Armée d’Orient will continue to be assured by the Armée d’Orient.”*¹⁷ The mail despatches of the Postes Serbes were exchanged at Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. There were six mails a month in each direction¹⁸.

In March 1920, the Armée d’Orient saw that the Serbian civil post office had not completely resumed its services. However it gave up¹⁹ creating a FPO for civilian mail as in Constantinople (FPO 506, 506B) and Smyrne (FPO 528) because there was not enough traffic. Thirty French civilian citizens in Belgrade were able to use FPO 516A, and it was decided simply to tolerate this.

On 4 May 1920, *“following the complete return to the peace state”*²⁰, it was decided to close the French telegraphic, radiotelegraphic and phone services of Yugoslavia²¹. Only some services remained active. On 11 August 1920, the Trésor et Postes were completely closed in Belgrade.

¹⁶ SHD/DAT file 20N934, service bill of 25 October 1919

¹⁷ SHD/DAT file 20N934, telegram of 7 February 1920

¹⁸ SHD/DAT file 20N934, telegram of 22 February 1920

¹⁹ SHD/DAT file 20N934, notes of 4 March 1920

²⁰ In reference to the Trianon Treaty of 4 June 1920, the peace treaty between Hungary and the Allies

²¹ SHD/DAT file 20N934



Figure 10: commercial cover from Belgrade sent by the *Vaguemestre d'Etapes* 33 on 14 January 1921. The small military units which had no FPO were served by a *vaguemestre* who toured. Belgrade did not have a FPO any more at that date.

The routing of the Bulgarian civil mail

The same opportunity was envisaged for the Bulgarian civil mail from 7 February, but was accepted only on 8 March²². Mail despatches to Bulgaria were sent via the service of the Postes Militaires Françaises in Constantinople, which verified the charges and censored all correspondence. Then the Constantinople office despatched mail under escort to the station of Keuleli-Burgas (on the railway line towards Constantinople, see the map in Figure 4), where the Bulgarian Postal Administration took it over. The reverse procedure allowed Bulgarian mail to be sent to foreign countries. From 28 March, the exchange was made at the French depot (number 8) of the Adrinople (Edirne) station²³ (see Figures 11 and 12 on the next page).

The routing of the Rumanian civil mail

On 25 May 1919, the HQ²⁴ accepted that the French military post could be used to handle the Rumanian civil mail. The volume was small: 7 bags, 200 kg per day. The fees charged to Rumania were computed according to UPU rules (Rome Congress Agreement Article 4, transit fees)²⁵. The computation of these transit fees was normally based on statements established once every six years, during a period of 28 days. As it was foreseeable that the service offered by the

²² SHD/DAT file 20N310

²³ SHD/DAT file 20N310, mail from Armées Alliées en Orient, Trésor et Postes, SP502 dated 28 March 1919

²⁴ SHD/DAT file 20N310

²⁵ "Pour les parcours territoriaux, 1f50 par kg de lettres et de cartes postales et à 20 c par kg d'autres objets, si la distance parcourue n'excède pas 3000 km" (extract)

French military post would be much shorter, the agreement with Rumania included an adaptation for the statement establishment.



Figure 11: cds of the Entrepot No 6 (depot located in Routschouk, northern Bulgaria). AAO stands for Armées Alliées en Orient. The French military post opened 9 of such depots (Collection of Bernard Jusserand)



Figure 12: commercial letter from Sofia sent by the FPO 524(active from 21 November 1918) on 14 October 1919. Cds arrival 20 October. Handstamp "Bureau commercial français / Sofia".

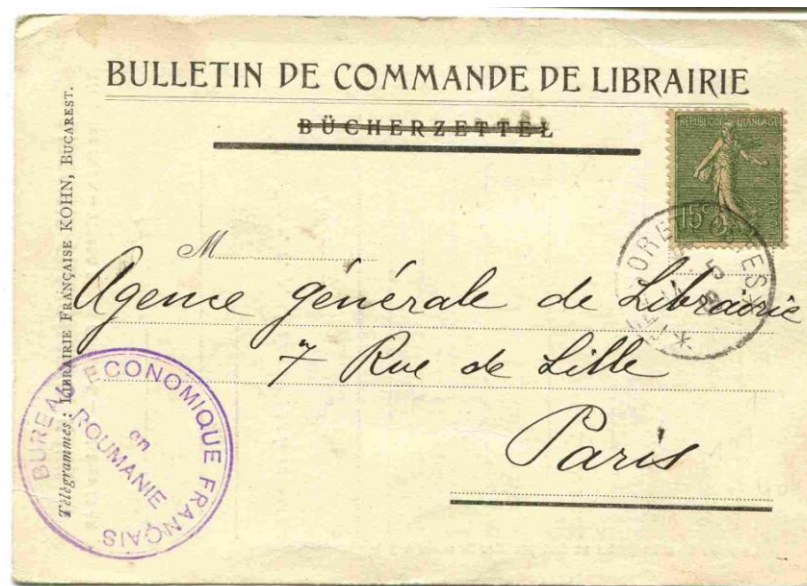


Figure 13: commercial postcard from Bucharest on 4 May 1919 sent by the French military post, FPO without number. Cds arrival on the reverse 21 May. Handstamp “Bureau économique français / en Roumanie”. (Collection of Bernard Jusserand).

The troops in Southern Russia

The French troops landed in Odessa on 18 December 1918 and stayed there until their evacuation on 6 April. The mail service for those troops was always going to be poor in those remote territories. On 27 February, private mail was authorised in Odessa²⁶. The only known example is shown in Figure 14.

Odessa was evacuated on 6 April because the Allies could not assure the supply of such an important city. Still, large numbers of troops were deployed in Southern Russia, notably in Ekaterinodar (Krasnodar, Colonel Corbel mission), Novorossisk, Tiflis, Batoum and Baku²⁷. Their mail travelled via Constantinople and the British Navy service. Communications were extremely difficult in the Black Sea at that time. As an example, Colonel Corbel, chief of the French military mission in Ekaterinodar, did not receive any mail for 2 months, the last letters and newspapers being dated the beginning of February. It was even worse for the Russian Government installed in Paris, as its mail needed about 3 months to reach the Volunteer Army. So it was decided to forward that mail with that of the Corbel mission.

For better efficiency, the FPO in Constantinople offered on 31 May 1919 to take care of the civil mail to Novorossisk, Tiflis, Batoum and Baku. This service had a propaganda aspect. In Novorossisk, Batoum and Baku, this was entrusted to the French consul; in Tiflis to the mission of Colonel Chardigny, with a sub-agent from Trésor et Postes. Letters, picture postcards, business papers, and samples of no commercial value were authorised and had to be affixed with French postage stamps, which were supplied by FPO 502 for a 3000-franc value. Registered covers could not be sent, but could be received in these offices. Postal rates were the rates to foreign countries applicable in France. However, FPO 502 asked for the abolition of the Tiflis

²⁶ SHD/DAT file 20N414

²⁷ SHD/DAT file 20N310, mail of 10 June 1919

sub-agent from 11 August, because there were not more than 30 covers a week! These were subsequently handled by an officer.



Figure 14: commercial cover from Odessa, 27 March 1919. Weak strike of the handstamp of the Russian-French Chamber of Commerce, Odessa section. On the back, handwritten censorship.

Conclusions

The Armée Française d'Orient granted the use of the French military post by the postal administrations of Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria and South Russia. This helped to mitigate the total disorganisation due to the war and its consequences in the Balkans. The mail volume was however small (from information from the archives, confirmed with the limited number of items).

This is rather surprising when considering the similar services successfully set up in Constantinople (FPO 506, 506B and 506C) or Smyrne (FPO 528).

The cover shown in Figure 15 shows that the French military post was still taking charge of the civil mail in Sofia by the end of 1920.



Figure 15: commercial cover from Tiflis, 13 October 1920. Franked by the sender and forwarded to Constantinople. Cds arrival on 28 October. Handwritten on the back “by the French military mission / Tiflis / Bank of the Caucasus / Mr Umikoff”



Figure 16: in 1920 the military post was still active in Sofia. Commercial letter sent by FPO 524 dated 24 May 1920. Transit cds by the FPO 502 on 28 May in Constantinople.

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20N414 Chemins de Fer; trésor et postes, fonctionnement des bases (1918-1919)

20N617-8 Trésor et postes (1918-1919) (Armée de Hongrie)

20N934 Trésor et postes (1919-1920) (Serbie)

20N970 Trésor et postes (1919) (Base de Raguse)

- “Le service postal militaire français en Orient pendant la première guerre mondiale”, Bertrand Sinais (1977).
- “Les armées françaises en Orient après l’armistice de 1918”, Général Bernachot.
 - Tome1: L’armée française d’Orient, l’armée de Hongrie (11 novembre 1918 – 10 septembre 1919).
 - Tome 2: L’Armée du Danube – L’Armée Française d’Orient (28 octobre 1918 – 25 janvier 1920).

For those who are interested in this complex period:

- “Captaine Conan” by Roger Vercel Prix Goncourt 1934, used by film director Bertrand Tavernier for a movie which received many awards in 1996.
- “A l’Est la guerre sans fin 1918-1923” exhibition catalogue at the musée des Invalides (Paris, 2018).

Items are from the author’s collection except where stated otherwise. I thank Bernard Jusserand and Pierre Roussot for their participation in the iconography.

I thank Bernard Jusserand for his careful reading and his excellent suggestions for structuring this article.

Appendices 1 and 2 follow.

Yugoslavia Study Group
will be holding a meeting at

Autumn Stampex
Saturday 14th September 2019
(10:00 to 12:00 Room F)

Business Design Centre, Islington, London, N1 0QH

You are invited to bring two frames of material (10 – 12 sheets per frame). The allocated room may change so please check the Stampex handbook that is usually given out at the entrance or see the display boards.

JOINT SOCIETIES’ MEETING
SATURDAY 3rd AUGUST 2019

A gathering of five specialist societies (Austrian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish and Yugoslav societies)

On the first floor of the Latvian Club, 5 Clifton Villas, Bradford, BD8 7BY

Full details from Yvonne Wheatley (booking essential)

Convenor: Yvonne Wheatley, Weltevreden, 7 Manor Croft, Leeds, LS15 9BW.

Tel: 0113 2601978

Email: whyareuu@outlook.com

Appendix 1

Table presenting the operation of the postal service in Armée de Hongrie from 1st November 1918 till 1st May 1919 (extract limited to FPO 501):

Duration of route use	Route used for mail to FPO 501	Routing duration (days)
From 1/11 to 10/11	Train: Salonique-Monastir Train (60 cm width): Monastir-Prilep Automobile: Prilep-Uskub	15 - 17 d
From 11/11 to 24/11	Automobile: Salonique-Melnik Train (60 cm width): Melnik-Radomir Train: Radomir-Sofia-Tzaribrod Automobile: Tzaribrod-Nish	18 - 20 d
From 24/11 to 15/12	Automobile: Salonique-Melnik Train (60 cm width): Melnik-Sofia Train: Sofia-Lom Palanka <u>From Lom-Palanka to Belgrade:</u> 1 °-Boat: Lom-Belgrade 2 °-Automobile: Lom to Vidin Danube: Vidin to Turnu-Severin Train: Turnu-Orsova-Temesvar-Verchetz-Pancsova Boat: Pancsova-Belgrade	25 - 30 d
From 15/12 to 10/1	1 °-previous route 2 °-Train: Marseille-Tarente Boat: Tarente-Corfou-Fiume Train: Fiume-Belgrade	25 - 30 d
From 10/1 to 18/1	Train: Marseille-Livourne-Venise Boat: Venise-Fiume Train: Fiume-Belgrade	10 d
From 18/1 to 15/2	Train: Marseille-Vintimille-Gênes-Milan-Venise Boat: Venise-Fiume Train: Fiume-Belgrade	6 - 8 d
From 15/2 to 5/3	Train: Paris-Modane-Milan-Venise Boat: Venise-Fiume Train: Fiume-Belgrade	7 - 8 d
From 5/3 to 20/3	Train: Paris-Modane-Milan-Venise-Fiume-Belgrade	6 - 7 d
From 21/3 to 28/3	Train: Paris-Bucharest by: Vienne-Laybach-Agram-Belgrade ²⁸	4 d
From 29/3 to 15/4	Train: Paris-Modane-Milan-Venise-Fiume-Belgrade	6 - 7 d
From 15/4 this day	Simplon-Orient-Express	4 d

The route duration for the other Armée de Hongrie FPOs is similar, but their dispersion implies 1 or 2 extra days.

²⁸ Probably to by-pass Hungary where the Bolshevik revolution started on 21 March.

Appendix 2

As a supplement to this article, this appendix will help foreign readers not familiar with the military French Field Post Offices to localize the items in their collection.

The cds handstamps are labelled "Trésor et Postes", because until 1924, the Army finance and postal services constituted a single organisation.

This appendix presents all the cds listed in the 500 series (Armée d'Orient and its continuation) used after November 1918. This list is based on the information collected in the archives of the Service Historique de la Défense. Bertrand Sinais had already published a very complete list in his thesis "*Le service postal militaire français en Orient pendant la première guerre mondiale*" (1977).

The archive records are incomplete, and we do not have all the exact dates for the numerous troop movements of the FPO. Note that we were also able to find mail obliterated several months after the supposed closure of some FPOs.

Vaguemestres d'Etapes (VE) can perform most of the mail operations for isolated troops and units too small to have their own FPO.

FPOs in italics are localised in Greece or in the Ottoman Empire, and are not detailed here.

501: Uskub (from 18 October to 10 November 1918), Nish (from 11 November till 24 November 1918), Belgrade with an extension at Semlin (until 11 February 1919), Belgrade with an extension at Vukovci (from 12 February till 19 June 1919), Nagy-Kikinda (from 20 June), closed on 9 September 1919

501A: Vinkovce (from 17 till 30 April 1919)

501B: Arad (from 19 March 1919)

502: *Constantinople*

502A: Nish (on 14 November 1918), Neusatz (from 20 November 1918), Temesvar (from 4 December 1918 to 23 February 1919), Budapest (from 24 February to 19 March 1919)

502B: Sofia (until 21 November 1918)

502C: *Mytilène*

502D: *VE at Kilid Bahr (1922)*

503: Odessa (from 19 December 1918 till 6 April 1919), Akkermann (from 19 May 1919), Galatz (from 30 June 1919), Varna (on 11 August 1919), Sofia (from 8 September till 1st November 1919, date of suppression)

503A: Zelina (from 14 April 1919)

504: French military mission to the Serbian army (closed in 1919)

505: Neusatz (from 20 November 1918), Semendria (from 1 till 20 December 1918), Neusatz (from 20 December 1918 till 17 April 1919), Temesvar (from 18 April 1919), closed in September 1919

506A: *Smyrne civil postal service*

506B: *Constantinople civil postal service*

506C: *Constantinople civil postal service*

507: Russian Army, closed before the middle of 1918

508: Monastir, closed in December 1918

509: *Constantinople*

509A: *Constantinople civil postal service*

510: *Salonique*

511: *Itea, closed in May 1919*

511A: *Bralos (closed on 15 February 1919, replaced by the Postal depot entrepôt postal n°1)*

511B: Raguse (from 8 December 1918, replaced by the VE 26 on 26 March 1919)

511C: Scutari (closed 6 May 1919, replaced by the VE 27)

512: Corfu (closed on 2 June 1919)

513: Sanakov (from 8 November 1918), Sistovo (from 20 November 1918 till 11 January 1919), Simnitza (from 12 January till 14 March 1919), Bucharest (from 15 March till 5 April 1919), Bessarabie (from 6 April), closed on 4 June 1919

513A: closed on 21 November 1918

514: Semlin (from 20 November 1918), Vidin (from 8 December 1918), Semlin (from 21 December 1918), Kovino (from 9 January 1919), Temesvar (before 4 February 1919), Lugos (from 25 March 1919, closed on 15 April)

514A: Paracin (from 1 December 1918), Fiume (closed on 15 December 1918)

515: Sistovo, Zimnicea, Alexandria, Draganeti, Nihabasti, Bucharest (from 1 December 1918), Odessa (from 15 March till 6 April 1919), Bender, Novo-Causani (16 May 1919), Gornia-Banya (Sofia), closed on 25 January 1920

515A: Kishinev on 12 January 1919

516: Turnu-Severin (8 December 1918), Neusatz (from 20 December 1918), Szeged (from 21 March, 1919), closed on 18 February 1920

516A: Belgrade (creation 25 October 1919, replaced by the VE 33 in September 1920)

517: Vodena (replaced 18 August 1919 by the VE 18)

517B: Florina (on 12 December 1918, replaced on 1 May 1919 by the VE 18 until 15 March 1921)

517C: Monastir (replaced on 4 May 1919 by the VE 11)

517D: Koritza (replaced on 10 March 1919 by the VE 16)

518: not used

518A: Bohemica, Mirovtche (from 6 November 1918)

518C: Uskub (from 16 November 1918), Lom Palanka

519: Bucharest (28 February 1919 to after March 1920)

520: Florina-gare, Monastir (from 14 November till 14 December 1918), Fiume, Vinkovce (from 25 April till 3 June 1919), Szeged (closed on 28 November 1919)

520A: Tsaribrod (from 14 November 1918), Lom Palanka (from 4 December 1918 till 6 February 1919), Temesvar

520B: Koritza (closed in December 1918)

520C: Uskub (until December 1918), Lom Palanka, Fiume (from 25 April till 15 October 1919), Antivari, (closed in January 1920)

520D: Veles, Semlin (from 20 November 1918), Lom Palanka (from 4 till 17 December 1918), Semlin (from 18 December 1918 till 25 April 1919), Zagreb (until 2 September 1919)

520E: Kustendil, Radomir, Lom Palanka (from 20 November 1918), Neusatz (from 18 December 1918 till 5 May 1919), Szeged (from 6 May 1919, closed on 7 July 1919)

521: opened in Routchouk on 21 November 1918, replacing SP 513A, Bucarest (from 30 November), Odessa (from 11 January to 10 April 1919), Akkermann (from 11 April), Belgrade (from 23 April), Galatz (from 20 July), Routchouk (from 11 August 1919), Bankda (from 10 September), closed in October 1919

522: Temesvar (on 1 December, 1918), Bucharest (from 20 January, 1919, closed in June)

523: Monastir, Neusatz (from 9 January 1919, closed on 1 March)

524: Sofia (from 21 November 1918 till 20 October 1920, replaced by the VE 35 till the end of 1921, then 524 reappears)

524A: Varna

524B: Not localised

525: Routchouk (from 11 November 1918), Jurgevo (from 20 November 1918), Bucharest (from 30 November 1918), Sofia (from 8 July 1919), Kniajevo (from 11 August 1919, closed in March 1920)

526: Constantza, Bucharest (from 9 March 1919), Sofia (from July 1919, closed in March 1920)

526A: Constantza (9 March 1919), Bucharest (from July 1919, transformed into VE 29 on 21 March 1920)

526B: Galatz (9 March 1919, transformed into VE 14 on 27 November 1919)

527: Karagatch-Andrinople

527A: not localised

528: *Smyrne civil postal service*

530: *Makri Keui*

530A: *Hadem Keui*

530B: *Hadem Keui*

530C: *Lule-Burgas*

530D: *Kirk Kilisse*

The Anglo Serbian Mission Christitch

by Prof.dr Milan Radovanovic

Some time ago, at the auction of Christoph Gärtner (1), a card of the Serbian warriors (Figure 1) appeared with a very high starting price of 500 Euros.



Figure 1: Card sent from Valjevo to Wirksworth, England, 1915

According to the description from the auction, the card was sent from Valjevo in 1915 to Wirksworth, England. On the card there is a bilingual stamp "Anglo-Serbian Mission / Christitch" (Figure 2) in violet with a Serbian manuscript censor, as well as the censorship mark Marseille (Figure 3). Unfortunately, the reverse side of the card was unavailable, which would probably have provided additional information.



Figure 2: Close-up of the bilingual hand-stamp "Anglo-Serbian Mission" / "Srpsko-Engleska Misija" - "CHRISTITCH"



Figure 3: A close-up of the faint censorship stamp, Marceille with the text: "MINISTERS DE LA GUERRE / CONTROL POSTAL MARCEILLE"

According to Monica Krippner (2):

"The activity started by Mabel Groujich, with the energetic support of Flora Sandes, continued almost by itself. Ms. Annie Christitch, a young journalist from one of the leading Serbian families, who was educated at Oxford, has used all her significant abilities to help write articles and to hold lectures on the culture and history of her country. Later, she and her mother managed the charity Mission in Valjevo.

Further information about this charity mission was found on the site of the Historical Archive of Valjevo (3):

"The mission of the British magazine Daily Press was formed by Elizabeth and Annie Christitch, wife and daughter of Ljubomir Hristic, the son of Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Christitch. Elizabeth was a writer and journalist during the Balkan Wars, as well as a volunteer nurse, while Annie was a reporter at the Daily Press. As early as February 1915, four nurses arrived in Valjevo, along with Elizabeth and Annie - a Norwegian woman (Magnussen) and three English women - Helsby, Spooner and Bunyan from London. On that occasion, the existing medical missions in Kragujevac received additional supplies."

Information found on the site (4) says that Annie Christitch arrived first in Kragujevac with Scottish Women's Hospitals:

"The Scottish Women's Hospital staff consisted of 30 women: 5 doctors, 24 nurses and one woman driving an ambulance. The director was Dr. Eleanor Soltau and Annie Christitch, a young Serbian-Irish reporter, was engaged as an interpreter. In Kragujevac, the first mission of the Scottish Women's Hospital, as a surgical, with 100 beds (the next three hospitals were formed in Mladenovac, Valjevo and Lazarevac)"

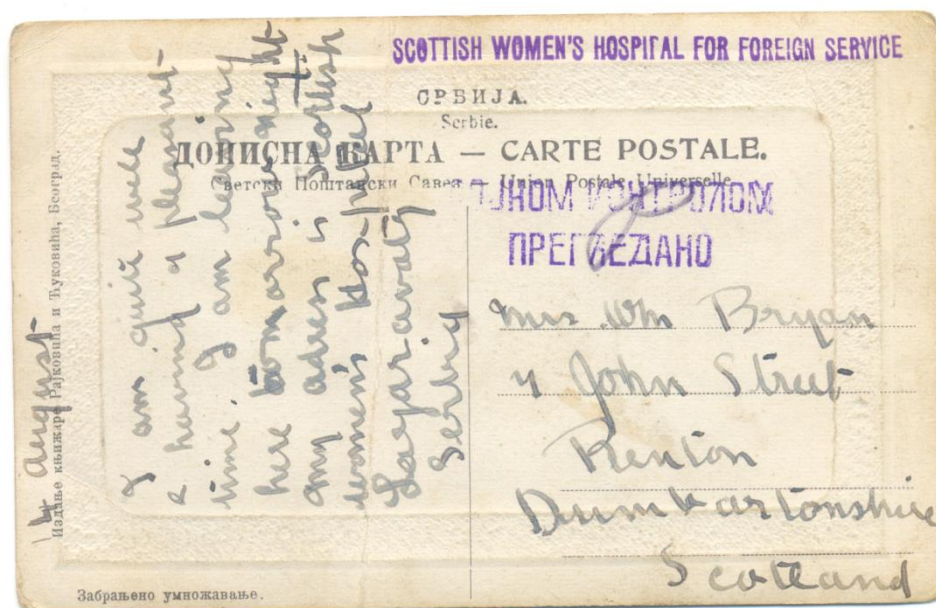


Figure 4: Picture postcard sent on 14 August, 1915 from Kragujevac to Renton, Scotland, without a postage stamp with a Serbian censorship stamp "Military checked" in purple and the stamp "Scottish Women's Hospital for Foreign Service"

Annie Christitch (Figure 5) was born in 1885 and died in 1977. The father of Annie Christitch was of Serbian origin, and Elizabeth O'Brien, Annie Christitch's mother, wrote under the pseudonym Ben Hurst. Annie Christitch was active and well-known in Catholic circles, for her efforts to improve the social conditions in Serbia, as well as a fighter for women's rights (5).



Figure 5: Annie Christitch - photo from 1900 (6)

One of her reports (Figure 6), published in the "FEILDING STAR", Volume XIV, No.3576 (7), referring to the period of withdrawal of Serbia under attack by the combined forces of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria was found and, with the gratitude of the National Library of New Zealand, will be presented in the most part, as follows:

"Miss Annie Christitch, a member of the editorial staff of the London Daily Express, who just arrived in Zurich from Serbia, where she lived under the Austrian yoke, writes: 'The catastrophe of 1915 found us in the centre of Serbia, in Trstenik, where a great number of wounded were lay in confusion awaiting an unknown fate from the approaching invader. My mother, Norwegian nurse, Miss Magnuson and I, decided to stay with the helpless victims and share our supplies of clothes and food for Serbian troops in retreat. The last night was held next to an open fire with sad soldiers who sang "Lament to Kosovo." Midnight brought a tragic moment. A terrible explosion marked the lifting of the Morava bridge Serbian troops retreated in good order.'

'The commander of the Serbian forces called us again to join the army, but the patients forced us to stay. The delay in the downfall of the enemy enabled us to retract the rest of the warehouse privately, which proved to be a good solution, since they could later be secretly assigned to refugees.'

'When the enemy entered the city, I proposed to take all the Serb wounded.... The Austrian commander agreed after a detailed inspection of the hospital.....'

IN SERBIA

RELIEF WORK IN THE INVAD- ED LAND

Miss Annie Christitch, a member of the staff of the London Daily Express, who recently reached Zurich from Serbia, where she had lived under the Austrian yoke, writes:—

The catastrophe of 1915 found us in the centre of Serbia, at Terstenik, where a great number of wounded lay in confusion awaiting an unknown fate from the approaching invader.

Figure 6: The initial part of Annie Christitch's text, published in New Zealand's "FEILDING STAR"

'The German passage through the city was fast and awesome. Horses were housed in houses, and women and children were thrown out of bed on a cold night. German soldiers have appropriated their beds, as well as the food they found.'



Figure 7: Private houses and shops were stables for enemy animals - Germans introduce horses into the shop (photo from the English weekly The Illustrated War News December 12, 1915) - (8)

‘When all of our patients were out of our hospital - those who were better and those who did not manage to escape, were interned, we interrupted cooperation with the Austrians and we went to Belgrade, trying to get back to England. In Belgrade, we have been awaiting an epidemic of suicide refugees due to the conditions of demolished houses and homes. Nothing left, everything was robbed.”

Another card was found on the Internet related to Annie Christitch (Figure 8). That this is about Annie, not Elizabeth, is clear as the title is Miss, not Mrs. The card was sent from Belgrade on 14 May, 1914, immediately before the beginning of the Great War and was sent to the Writers' Club in London. This card, however, confirms that the activity of the mother and daughter was in the period between the Balkan Wars and the Great War. This Serbian postal stationery was additionally charged with the "King Peter" mark of 5 para for foreign postal traffic. On the card in the left upper corner is the sender's administrative seal - “Markovic, Pavlovic (?) and a Friend, Belgrade”. Even on this card there was no possibility to get the text from the reverse, which would certainly have given additional information.

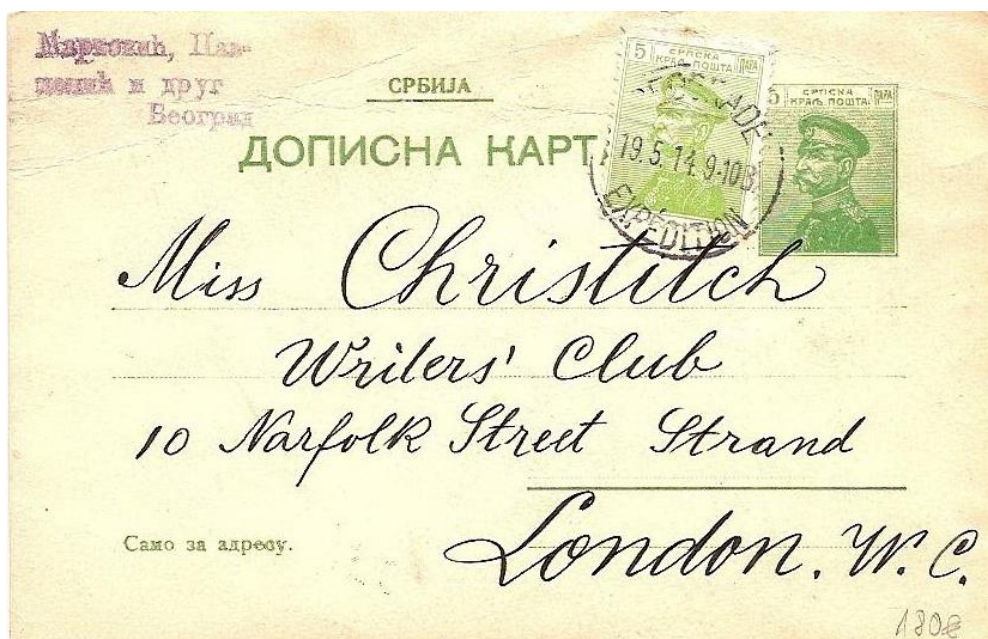


Figure 8: Card addressed to Miss Christitch at the Writers' Club, London

Finally, the third card shows a lot of answers and confirmation (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Card sent from Valjevo to Beckworth, Lindfield, England

The Card of Serbian Warriors was sent from Valjevo in 1915 (Figure 9, Figure 10) to Beckworth, Lindfield, England. On the card there is the previously mentioned bilingual stamp "Anglo-Serbian Mission / Christitch" in violet with Serbian censorship "SEEN BY MILITARY CONTROL". The recipient of the letter, Mrs Mellor Brown, lived at Beckworth House, Lindfield, on the outskirts of Haywards Heath. Mrs Mellor Brown is described on the website <https://www.lindfieldlife.co.uk/lindfield-blog/2014/3/1/beckworth-house.html> as being a "regular supporter of good causes during the Great War". The House was demolished in 2000.

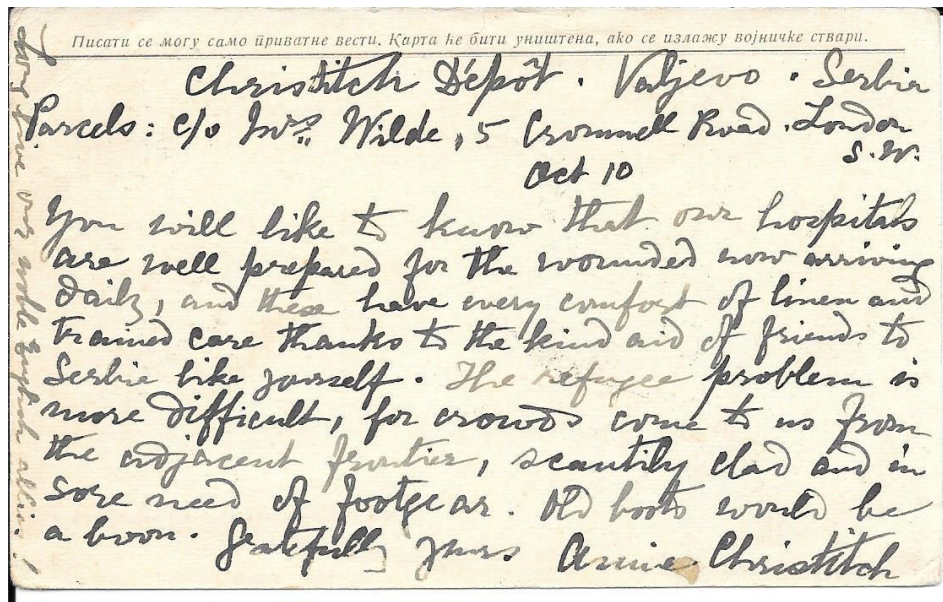


Figure 10: The reverse of the Card of Serbian Warriors from Figure 9

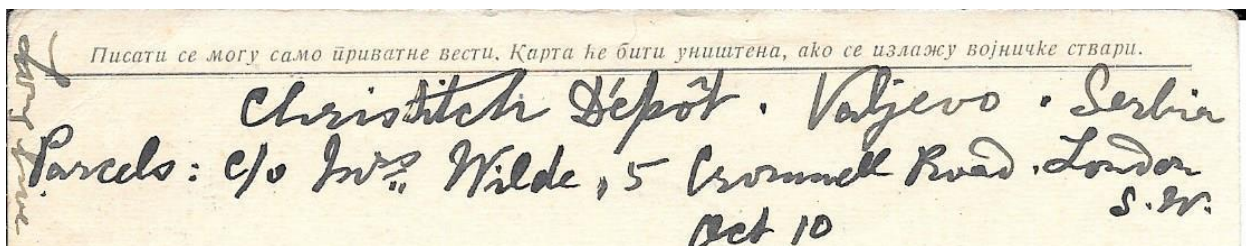


Figure 11: Enlargement of the top part of the card shown in Figure 10

As can be seen from Figure 11, the address of the sender is "Christitch Depot", Valjevo, and refers to "parcels": c/o Mrs Wilde ' 5 Cromwell Road, London S.W. Oct 10 (the address of the Serbian Relief Fund in London).

The text, which is on the back of this card, is given here in full because it confirms the humanitarian activity of the Anglo-Serbian Mission in Valjevo:

"You will like to know that our hospitals are well prepared for the wounded now arriving daily, and these have every comfort of linen and trained care thanks to the kind aid of friends to Serbia like yourself. The refugee problem is more difficult, for crowds come to us from the adjacent frontier, scantily clad and in sore need of footgear. Old boots would be a boon. Gratefully yours, Annie Christitch."

Figure 12: Signature of Annie Christitch (from the indicated card).

It is characteristic that on the card there is a text that reads: "Long live our noble English allies!" - vertically on the left side of the card.

The next card (Figure 13) was sent from the occupied Serbia under the Austro-Hungarian administration ("Kamenica in Serbien" – 8 September, 1918) to Annie Christitch in Switzerland and passed Austro-Hungarian censorship in Feldkirch. The card was redirected to London. The text on the back of the card is of a private nature, but it speaks of the beautiful and friendly relationship between the two young women and the trail that probably left with her charity's activities. Concerning the credibility of the card, it is also indicated by the fact that Kamenica is in the vicinity of Valjevo, where these women probably met and cooperated. ..



Figure 13: Card to Annie Christitch, Zurich, redirected to London

Epilogue

Count VIII, XXXII Minutes of the Serbian Ministerial Council: Meeting held on 4 September 1915 under the chairmanship of the President of the Min (istrian) Council (9): "A proposal for the awarding of Mrs. Hardi III.degree of Sv.Save and Mrs. B. Hristitch and Ms. A. Hristitch to the IV-th degree of the same Ordinance"

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